

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF BARRY LAWSON

Annual Meeting Date: March 16, 2025

Peacham Congregational Church
56 Church Street, P.O. Box 205
Peacham, VT 05862
802-592-3022

www.peachamchurch.org

The Church dedicates this Annual Report to the memory of Barry Lawson. Few have done more to facilitate collaborative planning for the future of our church, its Meetinghouse and the tight community of Peacham we love.

Eisenhower said plans are nothing; planning is everything. As a professional planner, community facilitator and dedicated Red Sox fan, Barry understood this: you expect the worst but plan for the best, and eventually, though it may take time, the best happens.

Our church and community is the better from Barry's quiet advocacy for our best future. In fellowship with Lynne, we grieve for the loss, remember and celebrate our friend Barry Lawson.

Table of Contents

Cover	1
Inside Cover – Dedication Page.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
2024 Annual Meeting Minutes	4,5,6
Treasurer’s Report	7
Budget	8
Balance Sheet.....	9
M. Olive Cheney (Capital) Fund Report.....	10
Business Committee Report.....	11
& Work Plan	12
Collector’s Report (with Fundraising Report)	13
Church Council Report & Draft Work Plan.....	14, 15
Church Administrator Report.....	16
Clerk Report (Vital Statistics) & Lay Leader Report	17, 18
Deacon Report, Draft Work Plan	19,20
Preservation Fund & Mission Committee Report	21
Nominating Committee Report.....	22
Planning Committee Report & Draft Work Plan.....	23
Annual Meeting Articles.....	24

DRAFT MINUTES FROM SUNDAY'S ANNUAL MEETING March 10 (which was recessed to next Sunday, March 17)

This is to inform the membership that the Annual Meeting convened last Sunday, which lacked a quorum (by two) because of the snowstorm, was recessed to continue following this Sunday's service (March 17th). That said and as explained next, those attending last Sunday took up the full agenda, took certain actions on routine matters that I will ask be ratified as the first order of business this Sunday, but tabled articles that the meeting believe require an opportunity for all to ask questions and participate.

Thus, the first motion for consideration this Sunday will be: Shall the membership ratify the actions taken last Sunday as reflected in the draft minutes circulated before the recessed meeting convened? If a member wishes to act on any of the routine articles so acted on, they will have the opportunity to move to amend the ratification motion to remove any such articles from the motion and the non-routine articles that Sunday's meeting will be considered once action on the ratification motion is completed. If the motion is ratified, the agenda this Sunday will thus begin with Article IV (approval of reports in the Annual Report, approval motion pending) and then take up Articles VI through VIII (nominations and elections), Articles XA and B (budgets, approval motions pending), and Article X C (Constitutional amendment on open and affirming).

Here are the draft minutes from last Sunday:

Article I: Moderator John Marshall convened the meeting, declared that the meeting (by two members) lacked a quorum and scheduled a continued Annual Meeting for Sunday, March 17, 2024. The Members and Associate Members present, however, decided to proceed with the agenda, table non-routine articles that warrant an opportunity for participation by members unable to attend because of the snowfall, and take action on articles the meeting believed are routine subject to ratification by the membership at the recess meeting on Sunday.

Article II: John led the meeting in prayer.

Article III: Moved, seconded and voted unanimously to waive reading of the last Annual Meeting's minutes, which are printed on pages 1-2 of the Annual Report.

Article IV: Moved and seconded to approve the Annual Report (except for the Nominating Committee report)—discussion of some budget matters followed; on motion made and seconded, voted unanimously to table approval of the Annual Report to the continued meeting on March 17th.

Article V: Moved, seconded and, following an explanation of additional nominations printed in the committee report plus nomination of additional persons for Treasurer and Member at Large from the floor, voted unanimously to approve the report as amended by the additional nominations.

Articles VI (and VII and VIII): Moved and seconded to elect the Deacons whose names are printed in the Nominating Committee report; then moved, seconded and voted unanimously to table elections under Articles VI through VII to the continued meeting on March 17th.

Article IX: John passed over this article (Deferred Business) there being no deferred matters from the last membership meeting.

Article XA (and B): Moved and seconded to approve the Operating and Capital Budgets printed on pages 4 and 7-8, respectively, of the Annual Report following short verbal summaries of the proposed budgets by Bruce Wescott and Barry Lawson; on motion made and seconded, voted unanimously to table approval of the budgets to the continued meeting on March 17th.

Article XC: Moved and seconded to amend the Constitution to add the language printed on page 28 of the Annual Report to the Church Covenant; following an explanation of the proposed amendment also printed on page 28 as Article XC1, moved and seconded to approve the amendment to Article XC; then, on motion made and seconded, voted unanimously to table Article XC, to include the language just approved by amendment, to the continued meeting on March 17th (accordingly no action was taken on Article XC2 (implementation if Article X is approved)).

Article XD: Moved, seconded and voted unanimously to approve the article as printed on page 28 the Annual Report concerning negotiation of an agreement with Peacham Historical Association on the Red Box and other Church documents.

Article XE: Moved, seconded and, following an explanation of the Bylaw provision governing the rights and functions of an emeritus Deacon, voted unanimously to name Bruce Maclean as an Emeritus Deacon.

Article XI: John Marshall was nominated and seconded for Moderator; after he stepped down and with no other nominations made, voted unanimously that he serve as Moderator for the 2024 year.

Article XII: Moved, seconded and voted unanimously to recess the Annual Meeting to Sunday, March 17, 2024, following the service.

The Peacham Congregational Church Annual Meeting reconvened on this day March 17, 2024 at 10:50 AM, being called to order by Moderator John Marshall. It took place in the Social Hall and on Zoom. We were led in prayer by John Marshall.

Present were: John Marshall, Barry Lawson, Rick Witt, Patty Gardner, Carolyn Deasy, Timm Judas, Lynne Lawson, Mary Lou Judas, Max Judas, Sharon Fuehrer, Mary Daly, Dart Thalman, Bruce Westcott, Jonathan Potter, Melissa Hough, Greg Lockhart, Susan Chandler, Ann Goss. On Zoom: Ellie Blachly, Marilyn Magnus.

John Marshall gave a brief overview of the agenda explaining that we were reconvening the annual meeting of the membership of the church from last week. We have a quorum. We voted in favor of all actions taken last week when we did not have a quorum.

Article 4. All were in favor today of approving the 2023 annual report except for the Nominating Committees as amended last week & today. It was a vote.

Article 5. Nominating Committee. It was voted to approve the report as amended by the additional nominations.

Article 6. It was voted to elect the Deacons whose names are printed in the Nominating Committee report.

Article 10.

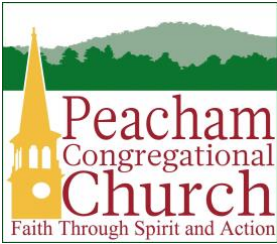
A & B It was voted to approve the Operating and Capital Budgets printed on pages 4 and 7-8 respectively, of the Annual Report.

C. It was voted to amend the constitution to add the language printed on page 28 to Article XCI (10C).

Article 10 D & E through Article II
See draft notes at the beginning of this document.

We left this meeting 11:49 AM and moved on to the regular Council Meeting.

Marilyn Magnus
Clerk



TREASURER'S REPORT – 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

February 2025

Submitted by Bruce Westcott, Treasurer

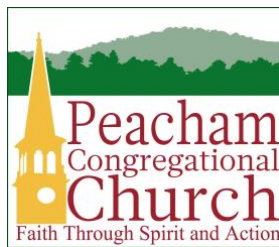
This report consists of four sections. May I offer a few introductory Highlights:

- Total cash gifts to Church Operating funds grew by about 20% over the prior year, though weekly plate collections are now very little – particularly compared with online giving.
- Church fund-raising activities did very well this year, compared to budget, though we don't seem to have the volunteer time to put together as many activities.
- The Church's investment funds (unrestricted Endowment and restricted Preservation Fund) grew this past year by 20.8% and 4.4% respectively, fueled by both significant gifts and good performance in financial markets.
- The cash which we take from the Preservation Fund and the Endowment Fund increased again in 2024. The amount we can draw is driven by a formula that recognizes three years of past performance. **Because we are in an excellent cash position, we do not anticipate withdrawing the specified allowance from the Preservation Fund, instead retaining it in a safe and well-managed fund where those funds continue to earn.**
- Starting in October 2022 we began to see real savings in our electrical bills, due to the purchase in shares in Peacham Community Solar (as reflected on the Balance Sheet below). Our total cost of utilities has stayed level and gone down due to our cost-sharing agreement with the Children's Center (payments for propane and electricity, PLUS their monthly rent.)
- With the greater insulation of the Meetinghouse accomplished in 2023, our BTUs consumed and heating costs are WAY DOWN again this year. I can provide some details once the heating season ends in April.

Sections of the Report

These documents can provide both summary information and some detail, about the "Operating Budget" (Church facility, administration, ministry, etc.), and the "Capital Budget" (equipment and facility acquisition, building, or major repair.) We ended 2024 "in the black" for the year, and we aim for nearly "break-even" results in the coming year, depending upon ministry expenses.

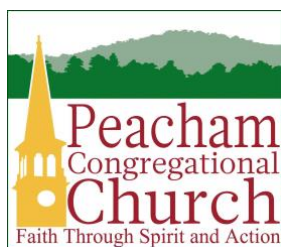
1. **2024-25 Operating Budget** (1 page) – summarizes the major items of income and expense in the budget, showing 2024 (actual and budgeted) and proposed 2025 budget.
2. **2024 Balance Sheet** (1 page) – summarizes Church Assets (property, investments, and cash primarily) and Liabilities and Equity (debts, plus our valuation), and growth over the past year.
3. **24-25 Capital Fund** (1 page) – The left side of the page shows the current position of our Capital Fund, and lists two relatively small projects proposed for 2025. The right side shows the amount approved and spent in 2023-4. Planning for a Capital Drive to fund an Annex on the Meetinghouse proceeded in 2024, but the actual fund-raising and spending for this work (approved at the Annual Meeting in March 2024) have not commenced.



Actual & Budget: 2024, and 2025 Budget

Operating Fund Revenues and Expenses
(not including Endowments, Special Funds, Capital Fund etc.)
Feb-2025

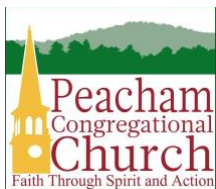
	24 Budget	Jan-Dec24	25 Budget
Operating Income			
Pres.Fund Annual Distribution	\$ 29,695	\$29,695	
Endowment Fund Annual Distribution	\$ 16,068	\$16,068	\$ 17,000
Bequests and memorials	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Total Other	\$ 11,200	\$9,600	\$11,100
Total Receptions	\$ 1,200	(\$2,000)	\$1,200
Missions	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Total Cash Gifts	\$ 35,600	\$41,507	\$42,000
Total Fundrasing Receipts	\$ 5,975	\$9,485	\$5,975
Other Unrestricted		\$1,150	\$1,050
Total Unrestricted Donations	\$ 41,575	\$52,142	\$49,025
Total Operating Income	\$ 103,738	\$ 105,505	\$ 82,325
Operating Expense			
Total Ministries	\$ 17,525	\$6,689	\$15,900
Facility			
Total PRESERVATION FUND RELATED COSTS	\$ 10,850	\$10,053	\$12,400
Commission & Fees		\$239	\$ 200
Total Utilities	\$ 4,600	\$3,204	\$3,400
Total Maintenance	\$ 1,700	\$1,913	\$ 2,100
Insurance	\$ 8,000	\$7,015	\$ 8,000
Total Facility	\$ 25,150	\$22,424	\$26,100
Missions	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Administration			
Total Employment Costs	\$ 24,264	\$18,832	\$29,616
Total Subcontractors	\$ 6,062	\$4,275	\$2,935
Total Office Expenses	\$ 3,980	\$5,454	\$5,606
Total Administration	\$ 34,306	\$28,561	\$38,157
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 750		\$ 750
Reconciliation Discrepancies	\$ -	(\$157)	(\$0)
Total Operating Expense	\$ 79,731	\$57,517	\$82,907
Net Income/Loss	\$ 24,007	\$47,988	(\$582)



2024 Balance Sheet (compared w. 2023) (Unaudited)

Feb-2025

		Dec 31, 24	Dec 31, 23	% Change
ASSETS				
	<u>Current Assets</u>			
	Checking/Savings			
	Available cash accounts	\$ 40,544	\$ 24,327	66.7%
	Restricted Funds			
	Endowment Fd. - ministry/church	\$ 409,097	\$ 338,524	20.8%
	O.M. Cheney Mem. Bldg. Fund	\$ 4,621	\$ 21,916	(78.9%)
	Preservation Fund (VCF)	\$ 658,647	\$ 630,665	4.4%
	Reserved & Memorial Funds (CNB)	\$ 11,674	\$ 11,767	(0.8%)
	VCF Flood Relief Fund	\$ 49		100.0%
	Restricted Funds - Other		\$ 546	(100.0%)
	Total Restricted Funds	\$ 1,084,088	\$ 1,003,418	8.0%
	Total Checking/Savings	\$ 1,124,632	\$ 1,027,745	9.4%
	Accounts Receivable	\$ 13,215	\$ 6,004	120.1%
	Total Current Assets	\$ 1,137,847	\$ 1,033,749	10.1%
	<u>Fixed Assets</u>			
	Peacham Community Solar	\$ 46,750	\$ 46,750	
	Property, Plant, Equipment	\$ 636,334	\$ 626,273	1.6%
	Total Fixed Assets	\$ 683,084	\$ 673,023	1.5%
	TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,820,931	\$1,706,772	6.7%
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
	<u>Liabilities</u>			
	<u>Current Liabilities</u>			
	Accounts Payable	\$ 335	\$ 144	132.6%
	Credit Cards	\$ 217	\$ 666	(67.4%)
	Other Current Liabilities			
	Fund Transfers Payable	\$ 1,623	\$ 1,001	62.1%
	Other Liabilities	\$ (10)		(100.0%)
	Total Other Current Liabilities	\$ 1,613	\$ 1,001	61.1%
	Total Current Liabilities	\$ 2,165	\$ 1,811	19.5%
	<u>Long Term Liabilities</u>			
	Wastewater Capital Reserve	\$ 3,800	\$ 2,600	46.2%
	Total Long Term Liabilities	\$ 3,800	\$ 2,600	46.2%
	Total Liabilities	\$ 5,965	\$ 4,411	35.2%
	<u>Equity</u>			
	Net Assets	\$ 83,605	\$ 83,605	
	Opening Balance Equity	\$ 936,688	\$ 936,688	
	Retained Earnings	\$ 682,069	\$ 587,668	16.1%
	Net Income	\$ 112,604	\$ 94,401	19.3%
	Total Equity	\$ 1,814,966	\$ 1,702,362	6.6%
	TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$1,820,931	\$1,706,773	6.7%



M. Olive Cheney [Capital] Fund Report

February 2025

Submitted by Bruce Westcott, Treasurer

Financial Report of 2024 Activity Jan - Dec 24		
Income		
Interest Income		\$9
M. Olive Cheney Fund donations		\$6,800
Grant Funding		\$11,825
Total Income		\$18,634
Expense		
Office Expenses		\$129
Commission & Fees		\$175
Maintenance		\$50
PRESERVATION FUND RELATED COSTS		
Environmental & Safety		\$97
Ext. painting & structural work		\$1,822
Sexton compensation		\$6,265
Steeple & Window Repairs (Contractors)		\$17,328
Total Expense		\$25,866
Net Change in Fund Balance		(\$7,232)

31Dec-24 Fund Balance: \$16,446

Projects proposed for 2025:

- ☐ Assess and begin restoration of historic Apse (pastor's office) -- \$10,000
- ☐ Install bead-board ceiling in belfry to reflect upward-turned lighting -- \$6000

Capital Projects Accomplished in 2024

Project	Priorities for 2024	Accomplished: 2024
<i>Belfry and Deck Maintenance; Lightning Protection System</i>	\$22,000	\$12,680
<i>Side Door Porch</i>	\$12,000	\$3,644
<i>Restore/preserve historic double-hung windows (3 in front; 1 at rear)</i>	\$6,000	\$5,780
<i>Interior & Exterior Woodwork Repair and Painting' Granite Curbs</i>		
<i>Video display for social hall</i>	\$2,500	\$763
<i>Hearing support system</i>	\$1,000	\$1,704
<i>Updated furnishings for social hall</i>	\$3,500	\$4,353
<i>Assess historic décor (Pastor's office)</i>	\$6,000	
TOTAL	\$53,000	\$28,924

Note: We are very grateful to our Sexton Jeff Lane, and to contractors Isaac Poe and Dan Devine for the great work they did and for keeping it well under budget. And we owe great thanks to the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont for supporting this work!

We spent much less than budgeted primarily because 1) we did not initiate work on the Pastor's office, and 2) the Contractor who might have done technical work on the steeple was unavailable.

2024 Business Committee Annual Report

The Business Committee oversees the church budget and finances, and the church building and its dual use as Peacham Meetinghouse. We conducted requisite full sessions in 2024, and in addition conducted special sessions as needed. Agendas and Minutes of these meetings are available upon request.

2024 was a year unlike any others in recent times, given that the Church had no Called or Interim Pastor. Not only did this mean that that our worship program was modified to accommodate, but also that our Operating expenses were significantly lower than in the years prior. With revenue (unrestricted giving, Endowment distributions, fundraising events, and Children's Center rent) remaining consistent with 2023, this meant that we realized a healthy Operating surplus. For the first time since the pandemic upended us, Operating cash flow was strong and not a monthly concern, and our Operating cash position is now good.

Our Balance Sheet continues to be robust, with nice gains in 2024. The muddy current economic outlook nationally means that we could very possibly see headwinds throughout 2025 concerning it, as our investments could be negatively affected. As always, we will manage these investments as prudently as we can. Capital expenditures on projects for the year were somewhat modest, but productive, and under budget.

For specific information on the Church's financial position, 2025 budget, and 2024 results, refer to the Treasurer's Report. Highlights and other comments:

- For 2025, we have budgeted a break-even Operating result, in spite of solid unrestricted giving and rent receipts. This is due to our forecast of a continuing healthy cash Operating cash balance throughout this year (helped by another respectable Annual Appeal campaign at the end of 2024), and our decision, at this point, not to draw from our Preservation Fund in 2025 for cash needs, allowing those funds to remain invested. Again this year, at this point there is no budget for a Called or Interim Pastor, allowing this break-even plan; should we decide to call a Pastor this year, we'll revise the budget mid-year, with confidently-projected funding to cover.
- Treasurer's Report details Capital projects accomplished in 2024, and projects proposed for 2025
- Members of the Business Committee for the full year were Bruce Westcott, Bruce Maclean, Ed Schneider, and Rick Witt (Interim Chair). Ed Schneider resigned at the beginning of 2025. Due to this and prior resignations, only three members currently serve on the Committee, and this is three less than the number called for by our By-laws. We aim to rectify this member deficit promptly.
- We continue to search for a part-time Administrator, and an Assistant Treasurer, to alleviate the tasks of current, overworked volunteers.

Finally, the Business Committee wishes to thank all in the Church family and team for everything they do, as the Church continues in transition mode. This cooperation makes the work of our Committee rewarding.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Witt- Interim Business Committee Chair
March 8, 2025

CHURCH BUSINESS COMMITTEE 2025 WORK PLAN

1. Governance Church Business Committee ("BC"):

- a) Review subcommittees (Annual Appeal, Children's Center, joint planning subcommittee on Capital Campaign & Investment), and, concerning the required Advancement Committee, consider appointing, consolidating with BC, delegating responsibilities to Transition Working Group/Capital Campaign Committee and/or defer to 2025
- b) Participate in Council Meetings on membership rights and Church governance
- c) Participate in Transition Working/Capital Campaign Committee
- d) Review email approval policy, and consider amendment to increase amount of delegated authority to BC Chair and, for larger expenses, a two-person subcommittee Fill-out BC to six members.

2. Church OPEX budget/cost management- specific goals

- a) Tight monthly control- as always, and more regularly if necessary, with particular attention to budgeted expenses for administrative and ministry support as well as pulpit supply
- b) Strive to realize the break-even Operating result as budgeted for 2025, evaluating and monitoring results of Annual Appeal
- c) In September, organize Annual Appeal, applying lessons learned
- d) Appoint an Assistant Treasurer and Admin Assistant if the right person can be found, and will accept
- e) Oversee annual audit, or develop alternative means of auditing if no auditors are elected at the Annual Meeting or appointed by Council
- f) Monitor new Protocol for Meetinghouse Use
- g) Monitor Endowment through Investment Committee
- h) Regularly inform congregants of expedited BC approval process for unbudgeted expenses

3. Church CAPEX- budget, project management

- a) Review and evaluate membership and authority of joint Church-community Working Group for possible Capital Campaign; oversee capital-fund management
- b) Monitor expenditures under approved Capital Budget for 2025 and long-term, including delegation of oversight authority to two BC members/subcommittee, subject to adoption of an approval protocol similar to current protocol for approving operating expenses

4. Children's Center landlord/tenant relationship

- a) Operating Committee- appoint, monitor regular, timely functioning generally, and address Social Hall and other issues that will or may arise
- b) Negotiate with Center agreed 2026 adjustment of rent, utility costs going forward, and true-up of past utility and other shared costs

5. Building Management

- a) Prudent use of Sexton services- regular maintenance, systems management, project facilitation
- b) Delegate authority for special projects (kitchen improvements, heating system, existing and improved security, Apse project, etc.)

2024 COLLECTORS REPORT

Income:

General Fund	44,248.18	
Dividends and Interest	19.98	
Use of Building	975.00	
		45,243.16

Fund Raisers:

Memory Tree	3,202.00	
Pig Roast (July 4 th)	2,812.00	
Fall Foliage Dinner	2,174.00	
Fall Bazaar	773.74	
Winter Carnival	433.00	
Town Meeting Lunch	96.00	
Meeting House Minutes	20.00	
Community Meals	2,059.56	
		11,570.30

Misc:

Preservation Fund Distribution	29,745.00	
Preservation Fund	550.00	
Mission	1,179.20	
Memorial Fund	400.00	
Organ Fund	2,000.00	
Peacham Children Center	14,446.93	
Capital Campaign	5,682.75	
Flowers	174.90	
Inter Revenue Service	31.68	
Steeple Lighting	100.00	
		54,310.46

Total Income: \$111,123.92

Prepared by: Ann Goss Date: February 28, 2025

2024 Council Report

The Council is the Church's Board of Directors. It held four regular quarterly meetings this year and met informally when necessary.

Streamlined by a Bylaws amendment some years ago, the Council has nine elected positions (compared previously to 25 plus) but conducts meetings open to participation by all. This is an example of our long-range Plan's goal to streamline committees and governance generally, and I have several suggestions below on further streamlining governance by the Council and other committees.

We entered the year with seven priorities:

- Grow membership and participation: We did not add members, but my sense is that participation in Church activities increased. Growth remains our first need and thus priority, and I believe that we need to find and call a pastor, likely shared with another church, to provide leadership that will increase membership and participation: finding and calling a Pastor should be our first priority in 2025.
- Meetinghouse preservation and improvement: The Church completed repairs to the belfry and clock tower, front and rear windows, front doors, and side entrance; it purchased round tables and comfortable chairs for the Social Hall; and the Church has formed a joint church-community committee to lead a long-term capital campaign, which will begin later this year with an exploratory silent phase.
- Visitation: Informal visitation, in the form of phone calls, checking in, etc. increased, and Carol Fox has taken the lead in organizing our Peacham Neighbors Group.
- Rethink Missions: We made no progress on this priority of our Plan, in part because of our focus on pastoral transition, and as noted elsewhere we did not appoint a Mission Committee, so this remains an unmet priority needing attention.
- Meetinghouse Use Protocol: We have drafted the procedures, website/calendar material, checklists and suggested-fee schedule; the Protocol will be implemented soon, and this need no longer be a Church priority.
- Legacy/Planned Giving: The material, previously drafted by Dave Edwards, will be returned to the website by or soon after the Annual Meeting; we need to use the material to create a brochure, but this no longer should be a Church priority (but working to encourage legacy gifts always is).
- Support Grange equivalent: We hosted a well-attended agrarian conference, "Land That I Love," and agrarian-focused services at Thanksgiving and last month; we should continue to support the agrarian program.

In restructuring this list of priorities for 2025, I recommend adding streamlining of governance further and possibly highlighting family as a specific component of a welcoming, vibrant congregation.

Our Plan as noted calls on the Church to streamline governance including our committees and the number of meetings they require. At the Annual Meeting, I recommend we consider the following changes which do not require amendment of our Constitution and Bylaws:

- Consolidation: Following the recent decision to consolidate the Search Committee into the Deacons (with two non-Deacon members), we could consolidate other committees; for example, the Council could appoint the Deacons as the Mission Committee required by the Bylaws.

- Delegation of Authority: Following the procedure for quick approvals established by the Business Committee, that Committee and the Deacons could delegate decision authority to an individual member or subcommittee of two or three members, subject to reporting of significant decisions to each committee so that one or more members could ask for a special meeting to consider the decision (or the individual/subcommittee could choose to defer significant decisions to the next regularly-scheduled meeting).
- Leadership: Between Council meetings, instead of a working group, the Chair could call meetings of officers and the chairs of our committees to coordinate the work of the Church, and the Chair would then report to quarterly Council meetings.

The Church could also consider, alternatively, restructuring Church governance to empower the Council to make ministry and business decisions through elected officers and other Council members, a change that would require amendment of the Constitution and Bylaws by the membership.

Our Mission Statement is to provide spiritual support and service to the community and preserve the Meetinghouse as the community's gathering place regardless of faith. Recently, a millennial visitor, looking at the posted characteristics of a vibrant congregation, asked me what's missing from the list of characteristics. He then said that his response would be: family. While I do not doubt that our open-and-affirming congregation includes support of our community's diverse families, our Mission Statement does not mention families expressly. We should consider whether our Value and Mission Statements and the goals of our long-range Plan should expressly include support and service to families.

We do much with few. To do more, to fulfill our Mission, we need to grow, numerically and spiritually, and to do so we need to find and call pastoral leadership.

John Marshall, Council Chair

DRAFT 2025 COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Governance

- Oversee Search Committee work to find our next Pastor.
- At the Annual Meeting or an informal meeting to follow, conduct a meeting on governance and membership rights and consider specifically restructuring our governance/committee structure.
- Form a leadership team to include Officers and Committee Chairs.

2025 Priorities

- Oversee priorities restructured as proposed in the Council report above.
- Consider making Governance restructuring and family focus as additional priorities.
- Oversee the work of the joint Church-community committee that will lead the Capital Campaign.

Other

- Oversee Planning Committee's work.
- Ensure continued focus on community building through Meetinghouse activities, services and Mission support.

Church Administrator Report - 2024

I am going to say again this year how fortunate we are to have Jonathan Potter keeping our social media and website up and running. We need to train another person on the sound system and the streaming equipment so that even if two of us are absent, we can keep everything running. There was lots of work done on the website and we wish to thank Mel Reis for stepping in to help rework a few things. We couldn't have done it without her.

Our fundraising suffered in 2023. We did not hold our annual Rummage Sale and brainstormed to see if there were a way to hold it in 2024. With our small numbers, it is a difficult task to dispose of the items that did not sell.

Once again, we purchased the pulled pork from Sarky's Smoke House now located in Wells River, for the July 4th public meal but our attendance was a bit off from last year. There was conversation of having the meal on July 3rd this coming year. There will be discussion after the first of the year.

Our Annual Fall Foliage Meal was well attended, and we had a new team to run it. Melissa Hough took the lead, and many hands made for lighter work. We served Maple Glazed baked ham, baked potatoes with a great selection of toppings, winter squash, coleslaw, home-made pickles and Ron Craig's delicious Cider. The dining room was decorated, and we were able to seat many people with our new round tables. Melissa purchased decorations and chafing dishes. We need to reimburse her for what she purchased. It was a new way for us to serve and worked very well.

We had good participation for the annual Memory Tree and the Pet memory tree. We again held an informal service in the sanctuary in the then lit the outside trees. We then gathered for grilled cheese sandwiches and tomato soup in the social hall after we lit the blue lights on the tree. Our attendance was sparse, but it was Thanksgiving weekend and many people were unavailable.

We were fortunate to have a few high-school boys help with the take-down and set-up of the children's center until one of the boys was injured in an auto accident. The church showered him with cards, and he was able to attend our advent services, and he helped light the Advent Candles.

We replaced the kitchen stove with a shiny new stainless-steel model. Instruction manuals were made for both the stove and the dishwasher. The business committee has been working on building usage forms to streamline the process.

I wish to thank our small but mighty group that is always available to help when needed.

Patty Gardner
Church Administrator

Vital Statistics – 2024

Deaths in the Peacham Church Community

Dylan Kempton

David Magnus -DOD – July 25, 2024 – Celebration of Life Sept. 7, 2024

Steve Gagliardi

Ann Mills

Mary Williams – DOD -December 21, 2024 – Celebration of Life in Spring, 2024

No Births associated with the church in 2024

No Marriages associated with the church in 2024

Schedule of Preaching 2024

1/7/24	CANCELLED - SNOW
1/14/24	Dr. Ken Vos, “What is Sweeter than Revenge?”
1/21/24	Rev. John Morris, “Fundamental Things”
1/28/24	Coffee House
2/4/24	Patty Gardner – “Epiphany”
2/11/23	Dr. Ken Vos, “Up from Eden” (Deacons lead)
2/18/24	Rev. John Morris, “The Circle of Love” (Lynne leads)
2/25/23	Coffee House Service – Susan Chandler
3/3/24	Rev. Bob Potter “Don’t Forget!” (Potter leads)
3/10/23	Rev. John Morris, “Living Hopefully” (Lynne leads)
3/17/24	Dr. Ken Vos “What the Cross Means to Me” (Lynne leads)
3/24/24	Rev. Carol Fox, “Living Into Palm Sunday” (Deacons)
3/31/24	Rev. John Morris, Easter Sunday, “Hallelujah” (Deacons)
4/7/24	R.D. Eno, “Moses” (Lynne)
4/14/24	Fr. Daniel Miller, “The Imaginations of Our Hearts” (Lynne)
4/21/24	Dr. Ken Vos, “Micah on the Essence of Religion,” (Deacons)
4/28/24	Rev. Linda Simmons, “Searching for Mercy” (Deacons)
5/5/24	Rev. Curtis Metzger, “The Mysterious Spiritual Alchemy of Contemplative Prayer” (Deacons)
5/12/24	Rev. Bob Potter, “Surge it with Love” (Bob leads service)
5/19/24	Rev. John Morris, “Hallelujah...continued” (Deacons)
5/26/24	Rev. John Morris, When words fail...the church sings!”

6/2/24	Abby Pollender, "What I've Learned About Grief from Both Sides Now" (Deacons)
6/9/24	Suzan Derby, Tim Berry, "Worshipping in Song" - Folk singers from Concord, Vt. (Lynne)
6/16/24	Susan Chandler "The Lord's Prayer Re-visited" (Deacons)
6/23/24	John Morris (Lynne)
6/30/24	Pride Sunday - special community service to celebrate Peacham church's official 'Open and Affirming' declaration" (Lynne, Patty)
7/7/24	Nancy Fowler
7/14/24	Ken Vos
7/21/24	John Morris
7/28/24	Lay Service – Remembering Dylan Kempton (Patty, John & Rick)
8/4/24	Carol Fox, with Communion
8/11/24	John Morris
8/18/24	Ken Vos
8/25/24	David Bullock, Morgan, Vermont
9/1/24	Rev. Bob Potter (canceled) – Lay Service
9/8/24	Abby Pollender
9/15/24	Nancy Fowler
9/22/24	John Morris
9/29/24	Coffee House Service
10/6/24	Greg Lockhart, Blessing of the Animals.
10/13/24	Rev. John Morris
10/20/24	Rev. Bob Potter (cancelled) – Lay Service
10/27/24	Rev. John Morris
11/3/24	Ken Vos: "What Can Christians Learn from Nietzsche?"
11/10/24	The virtues of storytelling. Ken Vos tells a story, "Wild Blackberries."
11/17/24	John Morris: Message
11/24/24	"Blessing of the Harvest" with Lynne Lawson & Ellie Blachly
12/1/24	1st Sunday of Advent - Lay Leaders
12/8/24	2nd Sunday of Advent - Lay Leaders
12/15/24	3rd Sunday of Advent - John Morris
12/22/24	4th Sunday of Advent - Lay Leaders
12/24/24	Lessons & Carols service w/Men's Chorus & Children's Chorus, Silent Night by Candlelight

Deacons Report – 2024

The deacons met six times in assisted with the sacrament of communion monthly beginning in June, with Carol Fox leading us. We thank Carol for her contemplative presentation of the Sacrament of Communion.

This year has been a challenge for our little church and we continue to be inspired by the quality of services that we hosted with a variety of speakers and topics. We thank Lynne Lawson for scheduling the services and putting many of the services together. She continued to find new speakers, even meeting one of them in the UK and inviting him to come. This goes to prove that it is truly a small world.

We have continued livestreaming our services on Facebook and YouTube. We have viewers all over the US. We continue to feel that we are enabling many people to participate remotely by streaming our Sunday services.

I did not think it possible, but the deacons, again, led a wonderful Christmas Eve Service. The children from the Peacham community sang several songs appropriate to the season. We would like to thank Dart Thalman for reading the children's story for us. We added to our community chorus and sang two songs, with the second being "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," which was very well received, having many in the room join the singing.

We continue to be hopeful that we will find a new pastor soon. We are working on achieving this so that we can continue to be a vibrant part of the Peacham community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patty Gardner
Head Deacon

Deacon's Work Plan - 2025

SERVICES/LITURGY

- Partner with working group to continue our search for a pastor
- Schedule Guest Speakers, set up services, secure lay leaders
- Continue lay participation in services and continue lay-led Sundays, and coffee- house Sundays
- Plan for major and special services in 2025 (Lent-Easter, Advent-Christmas, etc. plus special celebrations and annual canvass)
- Process requests for use of the meetinghouse by other faiths, if any

MISSIONS/OUTREACH

- Advise Mission Committee on mission activity (Bylaws requirement)
- Coordinate services/special services with mission activity
- Help focus missions on risk-taking and membership involvement
- Continue work (congregation-wide involvement) lay-led visitations with shut-ins

MEMBERSHIP/GOVERNANCE

- Coordinate with Council/working group to increase membership (communication about membership, including the difference between Members and Associate Members, handle protocol for new members (vetting, service recognition or not as preferred, encouragement of congregational membership, radical hospitality)
- Participate in annual Church meeting to explain governance under the Church's amended Constitution and Bylaws

Other

- Participate in Council working group
- Coordinate with Council/Business Committee on annual pledge/fundraising campaign Coordinate with Business Committee on space kitchen need
- Other issues/focuses that come up during the year

Preservation Fund

The Preservation Fund Building Committee met over the last 12 months to review the projects and work funded in 2023 from Preservation Fund (“PF”) withdrawals, authorize the 2024 withdrawal, and review projects and work funded in 2024; the Committee concluded that the Church used withdrawals to support preservation, repair, maintenance or improvement of the Meetinghouse as required by the PF’s governing Agreement between Committee members and the Church. The Business Committee has recommended at this time that we not take a withdrawal from the PF in 2025, although, should a need for building preservation or significant maintenance or repair work develops, the Committee could ask the PF Building Committee for a partial or full withdrawal at that time.

The Committee is also following the planned Capital Campaign, including to raise 10% of budgeted capital expenditures for investment in the PF to support preservation and maintenance of the enhanced Meetinghouse facilities that the Capital Campaign will finance. Finally, the Committee reviewed Fund performance, managed by the Vermont Community Foundation, and, owing to generous donations and especially strong market performance last year, investment resulted in a PF value as of December 31, 2024, of \$659,347.61.

John H. Marshall, Building Committee Member

Mission Committee

Owing to a lack of interest in serving on the Committee and the Church’s focus on its pastoral transition, the Council did not appoint Mission Committee members. Although the Committee was not appointed, congregants stepped forward to support the Church’s missions, including several food drives, the most recent of which set a record for donations; flood relief; and refugee support. Here are the totals for financial support of traditional missions:

Danville Food Shelf	\$234.05
Heifer International	\$312.72
Habitat	\$297.50
Church World Service	\$113.76

By comparing these totals to support for these missions to funds donated for them in 2023, page 22 of last year’s Annual Report, financial support for these missions decreased. The Council’s report, found elsewhere in this Annual Report, makes recommendations for restructuring governance that include the Mission Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

John H. Marshall

23368832.2

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT 2024

The Nominating Committee (consisting this year of the Church Council, as a committee of the whole) presents its report and recommendations to fill positions to be elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting. Under the Church's Constitution and Bylaws, the membership elects four officers; two members serving three-year terms on each of the Deacons and Business Committee; a member at large; and one (of two) auditor(s) [not an Officer position] serving a two-year term; and also votes to fill vacancies in positions for which the incumbent has resigned and the position has not been filled by the Council.

Please note that (1) this report makes no recommendations for several positions, which positions may be filled by nominations from the floor; (2) the terms listed below as expiring in 2024 continue until the Annual Meeting, which occurs several months into the next (2025) calendar year; (3) the vacancy for the current Treasurer position reflects Bruce's resignation beginning last year, although he has continued to serve as Treasurer pending election or appointment of another person to fill this vacant position; and (4) the vacancies for the Business Committee reflect resignations during the year and a position that was vacant last year and not filled by election or appointment.

Office	Current	Nominate
DEACONS	Chris Danielson (2024) Carolyn Deasy (2024) Patty Gardner (2025) Anita Vann (2025) Susan Chandler (2026) Rick Witt (2026)	Carolyn Deasy (3-year term) Chris Danielson (3-year term)
BUSINESS COMMITTEE	_____ (2024) Rick Witt (2024) Bruce Maclean (2025) Bruce Westcott (2025) _____ (2026) _____ (2026)	John Marshall (2-year term) Rick Witt (3-year term) _____ (3-year term)
CLERK	Marilyn Magnus (2024)	Marilyn Magnus (1-year term)
COLLECTOR	Ann Goss (2024)	Ann Goss (1-year term)
TREASURER	_____ (2024)	_____ (1-year term)
MEMBER AT LARGE	John Marshall (2024)	_____ (1-year term)
AUDITOR	Melissa Hough (2024) Scott Morin (2025)	Melissa Hough (2-year term)

Respectfully submitted,
John Marshall, Council Chair

Planning Committee Report 2024

The Planning Committee met regularly throughout the year to monitor the Church's performance of its long-range plan. Recognizing that the Church is without a Pastor and in transition and that a joint church-community committee is working on financing an important plan component, that is, preservation work and improvements to the Meetinghouse, the committee did not consider updating the plan this year. It did discuss changes in committee membership and structure and is looking to add members from the community and Children's Center.

The 2025 draft Workplan that follows calls on the committee to continue monitoring plan performance and, if appropriate as a result of developments in the Church's transition and/or the Capital Campaign, consider updating the long-range plan later in 2025.

DRAFT 2025 WORK PLAN

1. Hear periodic reports from the joint Church-community committee that is organizing financing for the Capital Campaign and from the Search Committee/Deacons on our pastoral search.
2. Recognizing that the Long-Range Plan (Plan) focuses on the Meetinghouse, including capital improvements to the facility, and on the Church as a Religious Institution (a work in progress that affects Plan goals), review Plan goals and tasks for success, inaction or lack of success in 2025.
3. When the Capital Campaign reaches its design phase, consider and make recommendations on design details, such as layout, furnishings and equipment, carpeting, etc., including recommendations for using existing space in the Meetinghouse such as the apse and the rear area of the Sanctuary.
4. Evaluate the performance and role of the Planning Committee and make recommendations thereon to the Council, including recommendations on increasing non-Church membership of the committee including representatives from the Children's Center.
5. Consider other actions the committee should study or undertake, if any, in addition to the tasks identified in the Plan.
6. In fall 2025, evaluate whether any updates should be made to the Plan and, depending on developments in the Capital Campaign and/or pastoral Search, whether a major update of the Plan should be undertaken in 2026.

Annual Meeting 3/16/25

The Order of Business shall be:

1. Call to Order by the Moderator
2. Prayer
3. Reading of the Minutes of the last Annual Meeting if not waived.
4. Acceptance by vote of the Members and Associate Members of written reports by officers (except for the Moderator) as well as written reports required by the Constitution or Bylaws or from any committee established thereunder as contained in the Annual Report and any supplement thereto submitted to the membership before the meeting.
5. Report of the Nominating Committee.
6. Election of two Deacons by vote of the Members.
7. Election of two Business Committee members, Officers and an at-large member of the Council as nominated by the Nominating Committee in its report by vote of the Members and Associate Members.
8. Election by Members of Deacons and Members and Associate Members of any Officer, Business Committee member or other elected position for which a competing nomination (to the Nominating Committee's nominee) is made from the floor.
9. Deferred Business
10. New Business
 - A. Shall the members approve the Operating Budget as presented to the meeting by the Business Committee and recommended by the Council?
 - B. Shall the members approve the Capital Budget as presented to the meeting by the Business Committee, provided that no capital expenditures may be authorized by the Business Committee for specific work listed in the budget unless restricted funds or income, other than income that will be required to finance Operating Budget expenses, are available in amounts up to the amount stated in the Capital Budget for such work?
 - C. Report from the Deacons/Search Committee on the Church's Transition, including consideration of membership in the UCC and the status of the Church's pastoral Search (no action by the Members proposed)
 - D. Report on streamlining committee/Council governance (no action by the membership proposed).
11. Choice of Moderator for the term of one year.
12. Adjournment